

Board of Selectmen
REGULAR MEETING
Town Hall
October 2, 2007 - 6:00 PM
MINUTES

1.0 The Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by First Selectman Joyce Okonuk. Selectmen Russ Blakeslee and John Bendoraitis were also present. Also in attendance: Administrative Assistant, Mary Ellen Wieczorek. Audience: 10.

2.0 **Minutes**

2.1 Bendoraitis requested a correction to the September 11, 2007 Special Meeting, Item 5.5, first sentence states incorrect Community Center fund account balance of \$12,936.00. Sentence corrected to read: The Finance Office reports the Community Center fund account has a balance of \$22,500.00, an ample balance to finally allow the new floor to be applied in the lower level of the Center. Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Blakeslee to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2007 Regular Meeting, as amended. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

2.2 Moved by Bendoraitis, seconded by Blakeslee to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2007 Special Meeting. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

3.0 **Correspondence** – None.

Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to suspend the rules to change the order of the agenda to take up items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 under New Business. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

5.1 Librarian Linda Slate applied for a received approval for a State Library Grant. Linda was present to ask the Selectmen to pass a Resolution authorizing the First Selectman to execute and deliver the contract on behalf of the Town and Library. In addition a Nondiscrimination Policy is required with the contract. Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to approve the Resolution for a contract with the Connecticut State Library for an LSTA grant as read, and furthermore, to approve the Nondiscrimination Policy in conjunction with this contract. Vote: 2 Yes (Blakeslee and Bendoraitis); 1 Abstain (Okonuk). Vote: yes. Motion carried. (Resolutions to follow minutes)

5.2 Oliver Manning requested that the Open Space portion of Public Act 490 be included on the agenda and at the request of the First Selectman, Planner Phil Chester was present to provide input. Phil stated that PA 490 allows towns to grant tax exemptions for forestry land, farmland and open space. The Act mandates forestry and agriculture but the open space component is optional, requiring Planning Commission and Town Meeting approvals. Selectmen and audience discussed the complexities of determining criteria, implementation, and monitoring. Phil stated that the towns of Ashford, Coventry and Hampton have adopted the open space component in their towns. The Selectmen felt additional information was needed including details from the other towns previously mentioned. **No action.**

5.3 Oliver Manning asked the Selectmen to consider developing a Right-to-Farm Ordinance. Phil Chester stated that passing a town ordinance would reaffirm state statute, not change it. Bendoraitis felt that passing an ordinance to affirm an existing law that we cannot change, is time-consuming and costly. Okonuk said that she and the Board continue their support of agriculture in town and have committed to work to educate the non-farming community about the challenges and benefits of being an agricultural based town. The town has made strides the past year in that effort including the well-supported Farmers Market and outstanding attendance at the Ag and Open Space Preservation Workshop. Okonuk thanked Oliver stating that his intention was good and if more folks in town felt as he did, perhaps a petition brought forward to the Selectmen and subsequent Town Meeting would be in order.

Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to suspend the rules and add new item 5.12 to the agenda: Discuss and act upon repair to Sisson Road Bridge. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

5.12 Okonuk told the audience the town was required to close Sisson Road nearly three weeks ago following an inspection of the bridge by the town engineers. The report indicated that the abutments were collapsing and the planking on the decking was rotted – the bridge was unsafe for vehicular traffic. Okonuk further explained that there are two businesses on the road – one with regular trailer truck deliveries. The town has been working diligently with town engineers and pipe suppliers to determine the most cost effective and efficient replacement for the bridge. Don Hebert of Contech Construction Products and Ron Ives, Assistant Road Foreman, Lebanon Public Works were present. Don detailed the options presented by the town engineers. The First Selectman and Assistant Highway Foreman will discuss the squash pipe installation (2 pipes) with the town engineer. Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to authorize the First Selectmen to proceed with replacement of the Sisson Road Bridge as an emergency repair, and requests her to notify the Board of Finance of this pending, unbudgeted emergency repair. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Okonuk, seconded by Blakeslee to suspend the rules and add new item, 5.13 to the agenda: Discuss and act upon the installation of a generator at the Public Works Garage.

5.13 Harold Melia of Melia Electric of Lebanon was present to provide information to the Board regarding generator and electrical issues at the town garage. In response to a request from the First Selectman, Melia met with the Highway Assistant Foreman (Ives), the Town Mechanic and others to determine how the generator at the garage could be installed with an automatic switch to provide emergency power during outages. This power source is extremely important as electricity is needed to dispense fuel. Consequently, public works vehicles and all emergency would not have access to fuel when the power is out. This has been problematic in the past. The replaced generator from the Middle School has been made available to the town for installation at the garage. This will require proper installation and electrical upgrades. Okonuk contacted Melia for an estimate for installing this generator, and also correcting the electrical wiring outside that runs to the newer garage. For the generator installation portion, Melia provided an estimate of \$5,000.00 (includes labor and electrical materials). The Town would be responsible for the conversion of the 3-phase to a single-phase at an estimate of \$1,500.00. The town would be responsible for providing the concrete slab that the generator would be mounted on. To run power out to the new building, would include labor and parts for removing the exiting wiring and replacing with new, upgrading the amp at a cost of \$3,000.00. Bendoraitis questioned if the town has been sitting on this project for several years, what is the urgency. Okonuk reiterated that the wiring to the new building is not to code and with regard to the generator, there is no back-up if there is loss of power for a day or several days due to a weather or other disaster. The Selectmen will review these expenses and other pending expenses that will be budgeted out of the TIP fund account. The Board will review these estimates at a future meeting. **No action.**

Old Business

4.1 No action taken on establishing one-year terms for Jr. House Committee as further research is needed. Item will be brought to a future meeting.

4.2 One estimate was returned for repairs to the house on the Aspinall property. Blakeslee Construction estimated repairs to the outside of the house and outbuildings at \$18,400. No interior repairs were estimated. Discussion ensued about whether to repair the house for rental, but the Board agreed that the cost of insurance and maintenance was not viable. Okonuk stated that she had received a call from an interested party to move or tear down the building. Board discussed the option of placing the property on the real estate market and sell "as is". Bendoraitis stated he felt that this was not the original intention of this purchase, and dividing the parcel would not be in the best interest of the town. The Board concurred to stay with the plan to possibly use frontage and land for entrance/exit to the school/recreation area and further agreed the house site is not suitable for municipal use. Options outlined at the meeting: 1) spend approximately \$20,000 to secure building to make the home and outbuilding structurally sound for the purpose of selling the property (house + 2 acres) 2) leave building "as is" with no financial obligation 3) have building removed and maintain as open land (demolish or sell to someone to take the building(s) off property and 4) leave as is, continue to insure, mow lawn and do nothing else at this time. Board agreed to request the town engineer to review the existing map to determine if 50' right of way West of property will give town enough frontage for right of way to back land. First Selectman will contact town engineer to request an estimate (without a survey) and bring report to a future meeting. **No action.**

4.3 Okonuk reported the asbestos abatement project required the repainting of the walls due to damage to the sheetrock/paint from the reinforced tape used to cover the walls. The additional costs for painting the entire lower level was \$6,700. After discussions with the abatement contractor, he agreed to the First Selectman's request to reduce his fee by \$3,000 to share in the cost of the painting. This still leaves additional funding needed. Selectmen reviewed options to cover this \$3,700.00, including the new TIP Fund Account. The Board will meet to determine the process for appropriating expenditures within the TIP account and take this unbudgeted expense into consideration at that time.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Item acted upon above.

5.2 Item acted upon above.

5.3 Item acted upon above.

5.4 Cemetery Commission Chair, Howard Wayland, told the Board he had located minutes from Town Meeting regarding the H.T. Adams Fund, Trumbull Cemetery Repairs. Wayland will address this at the next Board of Finance meeting. **No action.**

5.5 The Selectmen will review the Assistant Road Foreman job description at a future meeting. **No action.**

5.6 The Selectmen met with John Eskedal who asked to have his request to remove the gate on the northern end of Meetinghouse Road. He stated his concern about any liability now that the town has posted signs (Levita Road end) indicating pass at your own risk. The Board said these signs were posted to provide public access to the State-owned property abutting the lake. Eskedal reiterated his concern that the former First Selectman installed the gate without proper authorization and the public should be able to access the pond from both ends. He further stated that visitors to the lake continue to be harassed by a resident living on the Levita Road end of Meetinghouse and by opening both ends, visitors will not need to pass by that resident's house. Board discussed signage and agreed to review the prior opinion from legal counsel on this matter. Item will be brought to a future meeting. **No action.**

5.7 The Van Dispatchers who are now located at the Community Center until the new Senior Center is completed, do not have internet access. Okonuk understood from conversations with the Commission on Aging, that files need to be maintained for the Sr. Van Grant. The board took into consideration the installation and monthly costs associated and recommend alternate arrangements are made for transferring data and files during their interim location. **No action.**

5.8 Motion by Bendoraitis, seconded by Blakeslee to approve the Resolution for the Non-discrimination Policy pertaining to the Senior Center STEAP grant. Vote: yes. Motion carried. (Resolution to follow minutes)

5.9 Motion by Bendoraitis, seconded by Blakeslee to approve the 2008 Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule as follows. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
2008 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE
TOWN HALL ~~ 6:00 P.M.**
January 8, 2008 (2nd Tuesday)
February 5, 2008
March 4, 2008
April 1, 2008
May 6, 2008
June 3, 2008
July 8, 2008 (2nd Tuesday)
August 5, 2008
September 9, 2008 (2nd Tuesday)
October 7, 2008
November, 3 2008 (1st Monday)
December 2, 2008

5.10 Appointments/Re-appointments to Commissions/Committees.

Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to appoint James Smith and Susan Brett-Davis as alternate members to the Economic Development Commission with terms to expire 09/01/2012. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

5.11 There were no Resignations from Commissions/Committees.

5.12 Item acted upon above.

5.13 Item acted upon above.

Motion by Okonuk, seconded by Bendoraitis to add item 5.14 to the agenda: Discuss and act upon Energy Contracts for Town of Lebanon. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

5.14 Bendoraitis explained that the town received a notice from TransCanada (town's third-party energy provider) that TransCanada would be dropped from the account at the Fire Safety Complex as of 10/25/07. It was determined that CL&P has a deficiency in its billing system which does not allow CL&P to recognize two different electricity suppliers. He is working to ensure the changeover does not happen. **No action.**

Motion by Okonuk, seconded by Bendoraitis to add item 5.15 to the agenda: Discuss and act upon a Resolution for the Fair Housing Action Plan. Vote: yes. Motion carried.

5.15 Motion by Bendoraitis, seconded by Blakeslee to approve the Resolution adopting the 2007 Fair Housing Action Plan. Vote: yes. Motion carried. (Resolution to follow minutes)

6.0 Financial Report Update – No update.

7.0 Tax Refunds – There were no Tax Refunds acted upon.

8.0 Public Forum – None.

9.0 Motion by Blakeslee, seconded by Bendoraitis to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Vote: Yes. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joyce R. Okonuk
First Selectman